

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 HA-05 SIG-03 VO-05 SS-15
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DRAFTED BY EA/RA:FCBENNET,JR:EA/TIMBS:HMEINHEIT:CB
APPROVED BY HA - MS. DERIAN
EA - MR. OAKLEY (DRAFT)
HA/ORM - MR. BROH-KAHN

-----120428 042342Z /62

P R 042303Z MAR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 056343

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: SREF, TH

SUBJECT: REPATRIATION OF LAND REFUGEES TO LAOS

REF: A. BANGKOK 6420, B. BANGKOK 6295

1. IN ORDER TO UNDERScore DEPT'S CONCERN OVER REPORTS OF
FORCED REPATRIATION OF LAND REFUGEES BY THAI AUTHORITIES,
ASST. SECRETARY DERIAN CALLED IN THAI CHARGE SUKHO MARCH 3.
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OAKLEY AND REPRESENTATIVES OF
EA/TIMBS AND HA/ORM ALSO ATTENDED THE MEETING. MS. DERIAN
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MADE FOLLOWING POINTS:

2. -- US IS EXTREMELY CONCERNED BY REPORTS THAT SEVERAL
HUNDRED REFUGEES ALREADY HAVE BEEN TURNED BACK BY LOCAL
OFFICIALS, RESULTING, IN AT LEAST ONE INCIDENT, IN THE
DEATHS OF THREE REFUGEES. THIS FORCIBLE REPATRIATION IS
CONTRARY TO RTG POLICY STATED TO DERIAN AND OAKLEY BY PM

KRIANGSAK AND FM UPPADIT LAST JANUARY.

3. -- THESE REPORTS ARE DISTRUBING AND DAMAGE THE RTG'S POSITIVE HUMANITARIAN IMAGE IN THE US AND INTERNATIONALLY. THEY COULD ALSO DAMAGE USG EFFORT TO DEVELOP A DOMESTIC STRATEGY TO ACCEPT MORE REFUGEES OVER LONG RUN. IT IS PARADOXICAL THAT WHILE RTG WANTS USG TO PROVIDE MORE

ASSISTANCE, ACTIONS IN NROTHEAST CREATE OBSTACLES TO OUR DOING SO.

4. -- US STRONGLY OPPOSES FORCED REPATRIATION EITHER OF LAND OR BOAT REFUGEES AND HOPES THAT THE RTG WILL TAKE ALL STEPS NECESSARY TO ELIMINATE ITS PRACTICE BY PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES. THE SITUATION IN SONGKLA SEEMS TO HAVE IMPROVED AS A RESULT OF RTG ACTION AND LOCAL OFFICIALS ARE NOW ACCEPTING BOATS. THE SITUATION IN THE NORTHEAST, HOWEVER, NOW REQUIRES URGENT ATTENTION FROM BANGKOK.

5. -- USG APPRECIATES PREVIOUS RTG POLICY OF ADMITTING THOUSANDS OF INDOCHINESE REFUGEES TO TEMPORARY ASYLUM. WE HOPE THAI WILL CONTINUE SUCH A GENEROUS POLICY.

6. -- US WILL CONTINUE TO ASSIST THAILAND AND THE UNHCR IN CARING FOR THESE REFUGEES, IN TAKING THEM FOR RESETTLEMENT IN THE US, AND IN ENCOURAGING OTHER GOVERNMENT TO CONFIDENTIAL

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ASSIST THE RTG AND TO OFFER PERMANENT ASYLUM TO THE REFUGEES. WE STAND READY TO HELP WITH LONG-TERM RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMS IN THAILAND WHEN AND IF THAI ARE READY.

7. SUKHO SAID HE WOULD REPORT MS. DERIAN'S REMARKS TO HIS GOVT.

8. DEPT HAD INTENDED THAT WASHINGTON DEMARCHE WOULD BE MATCHED BY SIMILAR REMARKS TO PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK BY AMBASSADOR YOUNG AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE WHEN THEY CALLED ON THE PM MARCH 6, AS ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED. NOW THAT YOUNG VISIT HAS BEEN CANCELLED, AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE SHOULD TAKE FIRST APPROPRIATE OCCASION TO UNDERScore WITH KRIANGSAK OUR CONCERN ALONG ABOVE LINES AND URGE THAT RTG CEASE FORCIBLE REPATRIATION.
CHRISTOPHER

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